586 insurmountable aversion to him; 3) repeated theft; 4) sorcery by which the woman kills (poisons) the children of other women, and the man is afraid that sooner or later he will likewise become her victim; 5) the slow development of the woman who was a child when married, in other words, the man had overestimated her age (this case is as characteristic of the Negroes as the reason given for it: "So that his money will not be spent for nothing"); 6) such diseases as leprosy, elephantiasis of the feet, and a form of dysentery (tiɛ), if they appear soon after marriage.

In certain cases it may also happen that continued adultery and sterility of the wife lead to divorce.

If the reason for the return of the wife is well founded, which in most cases it doubtless is because a Negro will not give away his wife for nothing, the purchase price is returned, or in case the father-in-law has more daughters, a sister of the ex-wife is given in exchange for the unsuitable one. /264/

[691] Naturally, quarrels arise in great abundance on such occasions, and legal proceedings stemming from the refusal to return the purchase price of a wife constitute, next to cases of adultery, the majority of all litigations.

4. Medicines, Influence of Sexual Intercourse

842 827 In the opinion of the Pangwe, the seed is formed in the nipple. This idea was probably arrived at through the fact that at the time of sexual maturity the breasts swell and at times even attain the size of the breasts of girls of the same age. From the nipple the seed flows into the pubic region to the mons pubis (edă'k) and is deposited there to flow out during coitus (see medicine for gonorrhea, Vol. II, p. 50). There would be too much [302] if the pubic hairs were shaved off. Hence they are merely cut short as a hygienic measure dictated by the hot climate, the secretion of sweat, and itching skin rashes. Concerning the significance of the testicles, the Pangwe are in complete ignorance; they believe that they merely serve to erect the penis.

841 Menstruation is the sign of the ability to bear children and is looked upon as an effect of the moon (ngō'n = girl and moon).

575 184 We have not been able to learn anything about the ceremonies of protection against the bivur. However, Akam Eyene told us that when a member of the buiti has inadvertently eaten the flesh of his protecting animal, which is absolutely forbidden, he holds a meeting called dzimba in the course of which the wrongdoer, after dancing, presents his case. Then the [77] head of the buiti absolves him, spitting scrapings of the bark of the ovañ onto his head.

525 198 The buiti has a secret language. Akam Eyene gave us only the secret names of certain of its initiates, which correspond to the animals chosen as protectors:

He himself	called	ndzikwe	chimpanzee
Ondo Ngema	—	ngilabongo	gorilla
Akum Eyene	—	esingi	tiger cat
Ngema Eyene	—	mitumbu	panther
Bekeka Yebe	—	mogabene	elephant
Angwe Nseme	—	menyanga	snake
Mba Minkwe	—	meyasamba	rooster
Kumeyeme	—	mepeku	eagle
Abaga	—	ndzobe	wildcat

771 V. Totemism. Despite all questions which we have put to many natives of various tribes, we have not been able to find any signs of totemism. We were only told of instances of individual unions with animals, as in the buiti or following an akaga.

Family and Collective Life

000 In this chapter we will examine the life of the individual in the family and in the social group, from his conception until his death, incorporating into this framework the family and tribal organization as well as relations with strangers.

842 833 841 Conception (menoñ bum). A woman, we have been told by our male and female informants, cannot conceive until after she has menstruated four times. She is, in fact, forbidden to have sexual intercourse before her fourth period. At her first menses, the woman tells her mother or her mother-in-law if she is married (usually her mother-in-law, since there is hardly even a young girl, still with her family, without a husband); the latter henceforth supervises her more

842 833 841 meticulously and in due time gives her permission to have relations with her husband. The first relations must take place on the day following the end of the menstrual period so that the not yet completely dried blood in the organs of the woman can mix with the sperm of the man and make a kind of paste called nsüe a mon (lizard of a child), which goes back up into the womb of the woman and there develops [78] and becomes the child. If the woman has relations with a man before the prescribed time, she will definitely become sterile.

843 Sterility, for which many causes are recognized, can be treated, except in the case noted above, in case of bad conduct, and in case of voluntary abortion in the course of a first pregnancy. In order to 847 824 abort, the woman finds a midwife (ngañ minanga) who sends her out to look for the bark of the afamega vine and the tum tree, which she crushes and with which she makes an infusion. The woman goes to the brush and takes four irrigations of this infusion, and that is enough to induce abortion.

842 On the other hand, the woman who wishes to have children may be barren for several reasons:

(1) She may have aborted naturally and without desiring it. An 843 842 abortion is recognized as having a natural cause, that is, without malignant extemal intervention, in that the patient recovers three or four days after the accident and without having suffered too much. In this case the midwife gives the invalid a prohibition called awos which restrains her from going near any man other than her husband. She may not say a word to a man except through the mediation of another woman who acts as interpreter; she may not give anything to a man without this intermediary, and may not sit where a man has sat; and for this last reason she always carries a little seat with her. This prohibition must be observed for two or three months, after which the woman is again allowed to have relations with her husband. If at the end of three more months she is still not pregnant, the midwife then gives her a treatment which consists in having the patient take some soup (abura) made of pumpkin (ngon) ground on a stone and mixed with herbs (mia mi nyo, oyah) gathered and chopped by the midwife. These she cooks with salt and pimento in a pot at the bottom of which has been placed a copper ring (kon ango), covered by a large leaf during the cooking.

843
842 If three months after the treatment the woman is still not pregnant, there is nothing to be done and she has to give up having children.

(2) A woman may be barren after abortion because of her evur. This
842 is recognized in that she aborts with much suffering and then stays
789 ill afterwards for more than eight days. An appeal is made to the
824 practitioner, who renders the evur harmless by making it crazy. After having made the woman take a medicine made of white honey (abe), bark of a cola tree (abel), and bark of abal and atega trees, all mixed with chicken blood, the practitioner goes with her to the ovah where where he customarily conducts his ceremonies, and performs a kind of exorcism which was not revealed to us. Once back in the village, the woman follows the same [79] treatment as in the case of natural abortion. The secret ceremony performed by the practitioner is called avi evur akur (making the evur crazy).

843 (3) Finally, the abortion may have been caused by a male member
842 of the husband's family, the possessor of an evur, who is revealed by
789 the practitioner. If the woman wants to have children, the guilty one must die. He is discovered in the course of a ceremony, part of which is carried out at night and at which the presence of women is forbidden; this is the dance of the bisir. An akuma singer is brought, who recites stories of the tribes of both husband and wife. Before him, covered by a large cloth, lie three or four men who are the bisir. These men have in their hands pointed pieces of bamboo. A young boy of the husband's family is brought there. He passes several times between the singer and the bisir, who prick the boy's legs with the bamboo sticks. The child then goes back into his hut while the songs continue until dawn, the men of the village dancing and clapping their hands in accompaniment to the singer.

In the morning the husband of the aborted woman goes into the forest to find two wooden forks, a limb, and some branches. He plants the two forks in the village square, places the limb on them horizontally, and conceals the forks under the branches; this structure is called nzum. The child who passed before the bisir the previous night is seated on the rail. Before all the assembled men and women of the village, the aborted woman approaches the child and says madzuna, nzum me tela esi ũi, e mur awu makula mebum abure (I say, I stay under the nzum so that the man may die who caused me to abort).

842 After this second part of the ceremony, called elum nzum, the
843 child is hidden for eight days in a hut, and women are forbidden to
789 see him during this time; he is now called mvun. On the morning of the eighth day, the men lay him on a mat in the village square and cover him with mats and cloths so that the women do not see him; the inhabitants of the village are again assembled, and the men of the husband's family step over the mvun one after the other, saying: madzune, e mvun ebue ni ngi me ki me nga kule abum, me bure (I say, the mvun is lying there; if it is I who caused the abortion, may I die). When all the men have passed, the child is taken away. Some time later the guilty one becomes sick, has a swollen abdomen, and dies, there being no possibility of caring for him. After his death, the woman is treated as in the case of natural abortion.

843 Pregnancy (ndzua abum). When a woman is pregnant, she is bound by numerous obligations and prohibitions which aim to care for the child which she carries so that she can bring it into the world in good health. [80]

843 The obligations consist of taking medicines; to prevent the child
757 from having sores in the womb of its mother, she takes an infusion of the roots of various trees. This medicine is called ese bibolo (to treat infections); if it is neglected, the child is born with infected sores which never heal.

The future mother must also go every three days into the brush and give herself a washing with a preparation of bark of ebom which has fermented in water. After each enema, water is added to the vessel containing the pieces of bark, which are kept until the delivery.

That the child may be strong, the pregnant woman anoints her abdomen with an ointment prepared by the midwife with padouk powder mixed with raphia oil and bark.

843 Finally, to prevent abortion, the woman wears on her skin, like a
757 belt, a piece of okum vine, which is not removed until after the birth of the child.

843 All this does not prevent the woman from continuing her work; when she feels tired, it is because the child is sick, and the midwife treats her with one of the medicines mentioned above. If the woman's husband has not had children for a long time, the future mother then enjoys much esteem; she receives gifts, and her husband pays a great deal of attention to her.

168 the social and cultural organizations are directly blamed: the
166 breaking up and dispersal of the groupings resulting in the rupture
of fundamental interdictions (especially that of exogamy: with the
[835] present confusion each man risks marrying his "sister" and being
condemned to a sterile union); the abandonment of traditional
religious observances, especially the Biéri worship rendered to
[769 ancestors — so that the Biéri "revenges" itself, "according to cer-
●842] tain informants, by making the women sterile. Borrowing from
European civilization and from their neighbors has altered "Fang
manners" and resulted in behavior that is not valid for the Fang
and puts their social existence in danger. These are the principal
reasons brought forth. We have already in this chapter paid par-
ticular attention to these facts, because they show the subjective
aspect of the demographic crisis and how much the search for
fertility and for power, both linked together, still plays a part in
the present reactions of this people, how it takes effect in an
ambiguous manner by having recourse at the same time to modern
foreign methods and to traditional Fang methods. For the Fang
villagers the crisis is the most serious consequence of a situation
created by colonization — by "civilization," as some of them
curiously say. This is sufficient indication that these facts must
be integrated in the whole we have undertaken to analyze.

[101] III. The Type of Social Structure (1)

1. A study carried out with the help of documents collected especially among the Fang of the Woleu-N'Tem, and principally in Oyem region where Fang vitality is the most authentic.

Tribes, Clans, and Lineages

596 The recent clan renewal to which we have often referred has shown the still fundamental importance of the groupings established as a function of "kinship." This was immediately grasped by the first observers and administrators of the Fang country, who insisted on the "family" nature of the Pahouin groupings and came to the

562 shown by most observers as the principal agent of production in the midst of a slavery-free society and, for that reason, as a factor in becoming rich. These are the generally accepted opinions; what are they worth?

562 842 It appears to us that the stress falls primarily on the capacity for fecundity of the woman who is acquired legally. The wife allows the man to manifest himself as a begetter (ésa); she assures his posterity, which for a Fang is the prime property. Through her he not only proves himself fully male but he obtains a true social promotion, acquiring influence which grows in proportion to the growth of his family group, participating fully in the pre-eminent social stratum, that of the generation of "fathers." In a conquering society, as Fang society was up until recent times, a man's influence was determined more by the number of the warriors attached to him (4) (the wife properly giving him male

4. Let us quote an unequivocal proverb: "a relative is a gun."

descendants and relatives by marriage) than by his personal warlike valor. One might say his importance was in proportion to his aggressive and defensive potential.

The man without posterity is a lesser being, an inferior Fang, because he is powerless. It is significant that the word ki means at the same time "strength, virility, and power." This explains [149] the position held by the magic for fecundity, by the "techniques" to check the causes of sterility, and the fact that sterility is the sanction linked to the most serious offenses (especially incest). In a well-known formula, this state of affairs indicates the pre-eminence of the "production of human beings" over the production of means of existence." The chance discovery of a notebook in which a young man of the Oyem region had written down some of his dreams and the rules of conduct he followed has shown us the level of obsession which the pursuit after future descendents may attain.

562 842 159

We give as an example the most "direct" of these dreams: "I dream that a lady speaks to me in my dream so that my wife may have a child. I should roast a banana, go near a river, cut

562 this banana, and give half to my wife, after we have both drunk
842 some water. Then I should go and embrace my wife. Then I
159 should dip her (?) in water saying: who is this woman from whom you come?" Another text, given as a "dream," hardly deserves this name, or is only part of a richer dream (and it is still very revealing). It consists of a recipe for fecundity: "I dream that the devil recommends three herbs for a sterile woman, that she may bear a child...." The meaning is clear, all the more as various precepts collected under the title The Individual Will confirm it clearly. "I shall find means not to live any longer without leaving a child; what pursuits will permit a man not to die without leaving a child?; to choose oneself 'what is needed' to marry a woman who bears children (1) ...." One could call

1. Cahier de Daniel Ngema Ondo
[Notebook of Daniel Ngéma Ondo].

it a regular "complex of the man without posterity." The search for numerous future descendants is still the most important undertaking. If the reasons for "power" just referred to have for the moment disappeared, others have been substituted or have appeared: the fear of breaking a line of descent, of being only a "deceased one" and not an ancestor (mvam) revered by his posterity, the fear of abandoned old age, and now the desire to enrich the family grouping, which is an economic unit, by having at one's disposal the greatest possible number of active elements. Elsewhere we have pointed out that the possession of a large grouping is a guarantee of greater liberty because of the increased influence it entails.

562 Besides being the instrument for reproduction — and hence subject [150] as soon as she is married to the most complete control — the woman is also the instrument of production. While the man builds the huts, clears the plantations, and (in the past) was essentially in charge of "defending the women and children," (1)

1. In 1890, A. Fourneau observed in the Estuary region "long files of women loaded like mules" who

587 the law has not changed on this point. "No bride price, no marriage"
583 —Sa nsuba, ve alu' e se kik. We shall find this principle again in connection with legitimate descent.

583 Thus it is the absence of payment of the nsuba that gives their
837 character to free union, ébon, and to adultery, mejian, and makes them really infringements upon the law of property, justifying the fact
[684] that customary courts logically refuse to impose a penalty in a case of ébon when the girl returns to her family pregnant (2).

2. This is hard for some magistrates to understand.

581 A husband must provide his wife with lodging and clothes and
593 must clothe any children he has by her. He must clear the field she will cultivate, provide her with household utensils and, in theory, with meat. He must allow her to visit her parents, to whom he owes respect. He must not use sorcery (3) against her and must respect the

[586 837 754] 3. Likened to sorcery are fellatio and sodomy, the grounds for numerous divorces from former members of native infantry regiments.

[833] prerogatives of rank that she holds among her co-wives; he is supposed to sleep with her when she is not menstruating nor pregnant nor nursing.
[834] He must not beat her beyond what she can stand nor expose her vulva in public. /54/

A woman owes obedience to her husband, to her mother-in-law, and to the first wife, respect to her affinal relatives, therefore to her husband's clan; she must be faithful to her husband and perform her conjugal duty. She is responsible for cultivating the plots cleared for her, for fishing with weirs, for feeding her children, taking her turn at cooking for her husband, for keeping her hut clean and that of her husband when she is sleeping with him, and for helping to build them (it is she who applies the banco onto the frame). She does not have to take care of imported household equipment and clothes because these are biôm of a masculine nature (but the schools and missions
[842] are trying to train women to do so). Finally, and above all, she must be prolific: this is her first duty and a great deal will be forgiven her if she performs it.

judicial inquiry at Ambam in 1948 after a raid on ze mimfaka, an old chief who was a Protestant and an elder of his church declared, in so many words, that "the white man has weakened the ngil, and the beyem have taken it over; now it is the ngil of ngbwel /sorcery/."

The initiates of the kôn or kun, a kind of magic that enables one to assume another person's strength without destroying his body, also seem to be grouped into a secret society with meetings every seven years.

Beyem associations do not usually include both sexes; male and female sorcerers meet together only occasionally, for orgiastic sabbaths.

The distinction between white and black magic is, nevertheless, difficult to draw the present time, and one can never tell offhand if the small groups springing up nearly everywhere to protect their members against bad luck by using, in addition to remnants of traditional rites, recipes copied from magic manuals printed in France, belong to the one or the other.

To come back tothe traditional associations, we must underline /the fact that/ in them there was a complete separation of the sexes, to such an extent that women were often forbidden to speak the name of a men's society or to show any kind of knowledge, even superficial, of its rites. The prohibition was less stringent for men with regard to women's rites, since the nsem, the breaking of a taboo, was for them punished by physical incapacity or illness rather than by death. /66/

A women's rite like mevungu had both a village aspect, on account of its geographical framework, the jurisdiction of its huts, and an interclan aspect as a result of exogamy. Much less is known of these women's rites than of the men's, for the very good reason that men are not allowed to know anything about them. Missionaries have condemned mevungu as obscene: I have heard that initiates who have gone through the menopause are supposed to play a male role in dances miming coition, without being able to obtain the slightest proof or the least detail (1). What is certain is that this is a rite of

1. A woman "chosen for her large vagina" presided, seated with legs spread apart. Each initiate would go tickle her and pull the clitoris. (J. B.)

fecundity, of fertility, and also of the hunt: an unlucky hunter may have his wife initiated so as to ward off bad luck.

relations between the sexes, this emphasis to a great extent explains why no true peasantry has developed, but rather a class of nonpeasant planters, comparable in the last analysis to some of the European settlers. The Pahouin remain very much strangers and travelers on the land, whence the importance of personal property (in the legal sense) in their eyes. Nevertheless, a further development is in the making in this connection—described above (p. 96) which is leading to a strengthening of land ownership, /so that/ certain collective reactions in the way of procedure concerning land and domain suggest that we are witnessing, at least in the Cameroons, a genuine putting down of roots.

Tribal pride is still considerable, to the point of hostility between different branches of the group, but ethnic cohesion is found vis-à-vis outsiders and gives real unity to the Pahouin as a solid group.

2. The Individual Life Cycle

a. Conception, Gestation, Birth

A woman is considered pregnant, a nyoñeya abum, she has got a belly, when she has passed through four menstrual cycles, a nji yene ngon, without seeing the moon. Conception is supposed to be the result of the mixture of sperm, meyôm (with the same root as nnôm, pl. beyôm = male) and of menstrual blood, metyi me ngon, girl's blood or lunar blood; the length of pregnancy is calculated from the date when the last menstruation should have begun. Nowadays a pregnancy of nine months is considered normal, but some of my informants mentioned normal terms of eight or ten ngon (lit., moon or girl), a word that can as well refer to a calendar month as to a lunar month or a menstrual cycle. It is difficult for a man to obtain more precise information on this point since the subject is restricted to women. Besides, longer pregnancies are considered possible, though sometimes suspect; amenorrhea due to a fibroid growth is a proof of sorcery, the tumor being considered an évu. The fetus (for which the term is secret, forbidden, étyi, in any case for men, and probably for women uninitiated into mevungu) is thought at the beginning of gestation to take the form of a lizard, like the first man at the moment of the creation /of the universe/.

361 the sites of future huts with blood. The hen is then opened up
621 and divided among the principal warriors and the chief's relatives.
769 This strictly speaking, constitutes the totemic sacrifice. The
782 kid or sheep is then offered to the spirits of departed souls and to the ancestors.

After the sacrifice to ancestors the chief puts the akaméyôn
361 back at his side. From the mfex or pouch, which is never re-
621 moved, he draws forth a small bundle of dirty material wrapped
769 around a bit of red wood, ashes, and a few bones. All this
778 comes from a sacrifice to the totem like that already described. To these he adds the remnants of the recent sacrifice and buries
[824] it all deep in a hole in which he drives a strong stake of élun or éfirfira wood; sometimes a young ebony tree is also used.
[822 At the top of the stake he fixes a ball of paste made of red wood,
●842] white chalk -- the colors of sacrifices and spirits, and manioc, the symbol of fertility. A part of the clan or tribal totem is also inserted. The practitioner, with many gestures, songs, and dances imprisons within it all the evil spirits of the air.
[558]

The practitioner sows maize in the middle of the village, then plants a manioc root and particularly a euphorbia (euphorbia antiquorum), and puts a small fence around, so that the plants
[787] will not be desecrated. The village's prosperity depends upon their rapid growth. Should they wither, the chosen spot will be
[824] abandoned. Euphorbia has the power of averting thunder and evil spirits by means of its bristling points. Amaryllis and immortelles are often planted at the foot of the euphorbia, along with a few stalks of sugar cane. The amaryllis and immortelles ought to come from the old village, having issued from those which the chief's first wife had formerly brought from her
[842] native village at her marriage. Sugar cane is a symbol of fertility.

241 The women plant maize everywhere after these prelimi-
361 naries, and its rapid growth ensures basic subsistence. Meanwhile the men build the huts. The first ears of maize will certainly be offered to the guardian totem. Dried and preserved in the form of a coronet, they will provide seed for the following year.

595 585 Whatever the kind of marriage, the first wife is the only one considered [574] as truly legitimate. As soon as she enters her new hut, her husband leads her by the hand before the évora biéri, which is kept tightly closed. Throughout her life, the wife will never be allowed to look into the box, as that would entail a very grave ritual offense. She now takes a bit of palm oil brought from her own village, mixes it with some from her husband's mother, and rubs this symbolic mixture on the statue on top of the évora. This is a symbol of the fertility she asks of the ancestors and the guardian spirits of the race. She next puts a few grains of maize in a small basket at the base of the statue, so that her future plantations may thrive. This sacrifice should be repeated every morning, but only by the principal wife -- and it is often omitted.

[842] [782]

4. Hunting, Fishing, Husbandry

788 779 Before starting on a hunting or fishing expedition, likewise before going out to the first work on his plantation, every family head or warrior will be sure to invoke his totem. He does this first with an offering on the biéri box, then by touching his weapons, tools, or snares against the family totem.

788 224 779 In the case of hunting, the hunter, when charing his gun, mixes some of the ashes of totemic sacrifice with his small shot, puts his hand on his totem, and leaves confident of the outcome. Even if hunting does not come up to expectation, he would never dream of blaming his totem. He would think that he had had bad luck or, more likely, that he had committed some offense.

788 226 779 When going fishing, he carries some of the sacrificial ashes hidden in a rag. At the spot he thinks propitious, he always begins by throwing the ashes into the water, in order to obtain his totem's good will.

788 241 779 Likewise, when a man starts farming, at the beginning of each dry season, before giving the first ax blow to the trees to be cut down, he places some ashes or remnants of sacrifice in some kind of hole and sees to it that they are consumed by the